3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

467 Kök Moinak pass (15,400 feet) which was quite free of snow. There was only one serious obstacle on the way up, and that was within a couple of miles of the Darshart camping-place. The path had been entirely washed away by the stream, which cascaded for a hundred yards between perpendicular walls, and it was further partially blocked by masses of ice jutting out over the stream-bed. It took us, working hard, over an hour to get the caravan up through these narrows. Our camp that night, at 14,500 feet on the Chichiklik (" speckled," i.e. flowery) plateau, was the highest we had yet had.

From Chichiklik the shortest route to Toilebulung is down through the Tangitar or " Dark Gorge," which from all accounts is well named, so narrow and dark is it and so rough and boulder-strewn the stream-bed. In the high-water season it is dangerous, and we preferred to go two marches round by the Yambulak *Jilgha* (valley). On the way we crossed the Yangi Davan (New Pass) the top of which was covered with wide but firm-surfaced snow-fields and proved to be 16,100 feet above the sea. This was the highest pass we crossed between Srinagar and Kashgar. From the top, to our surprise and delight, we saw below us to the north a beautiful lake of purest sapphire lapped in the snowy peaks at the head of the Yambulak valley. This lake is not shown on any map; it is quite half a mile broad and when we saw it was still, owing to the great elevation (15,500 feet), partially covered with the ice of winter.

In the Yambulak Jilgha we made our first acquaintance with unspoilt, off-the-beaten-track Kirghiz of the type we were afterwards to know and like so well. Five miles down [622] from the pass, in the middle of one of the sudden but short-lived summer blizzards of the Pamirs, we found the headman of the little community, Ibrahim Beg, and his son Juma waiting for us with tea and a small carpet spread out on the wet ground. [272] Politeness dictated a halt of at least five minutes while we • [263] made a pretence of sipping the salty tea (the Kirghiz cannot afford sugar in their tea, so they use salt, though they much prefer their tea sweet) and felt the snowflakes insinuating themselves down our necks. Two miles further down at a height of 12,650 feet, we came to the *aq-ois*, pitched on either side of the brawling stream in a sheltered bend of the valley. The afternoon sun now shone strongly again, and as we passed the first huts its rays illumined exquisitely an idyllic scene—three or four Kirghiz girls in their quaint dresses and turbans

HEALTH AND SANITATION

S N 128 I. Introduction

For the purposes of this section the region has been divided into three groups: (1) the Turkic people of Sinkiang (including the Eastern Turks, Kirghiz and Kazakhs), (2) the Tibetans of Chinghai and (3) the Chinese of the Northwest (including both Hans and Moslems).

S N 751 164 Measured by Western standards, the area as a whole lacks most modern facilities for maintaining high standards of health and sanitation. The shortage of trained personnel in the fields of medicine, dentistry and nursing is quite acute. These conditions may be due partly to the geographical location of the area, being in the deep hinterland, away from the center of China, and generally lacking a sufficient water supply. The common man's ignorance of the basic facts of health and sanitation contributes greatly to the spread of disease and to the lack of precautionary measures against the occurrence of certain diseases.

However, the local population, while living under what we consider unsanitary conditions, has built immunities to many diseases, to which a Westerner, living under the same conditions, would easily succumb. Some habits that we consider dangerous in spreading disease may actually be without any harmful consequences to the local people.

II. The Turkic Peoples of Sinkiang

A. The Diet of the Turkic People

S 262 563 The daily diet of the sedentary Eastern Turkis consists mostly of mutton and rice, with vegetables, both boiled and fried, including onions, potatoes, turnips, carrots and spinach, many forms of S [272] soups, and pilaus. Tea is the staple beverage, served with sugar [263] and without milk. Bread, in the shape of circular rolls indented at the top, constitutes an important item in the diet. A variety of fruits, including melons, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, plums, cherries, and mulberries, grow in profusion in Turkestan and are abundant during the summer.

S 264 262 184 565 563 [539] The common people eat only twice during the day; in the morning and in the evening. The wealthy people frequently have feasts and eat a great abundance and variety of foods. Many of them suffer from abnormal obesity as a result of overeating and lack of exercise. A common proverb in Sinkiang warning against the folly of this type of behavior is the following, "He who eats sparingly eats ten times, but he who eats too much eats but once."

S 563 262 [272] The diet of the Kirghiz and the Kazakhs, the nomadic Turks, differs somewhat from that of the sedentary Eastern Turks. Their diet is composed mainly of milk and mutton. From flour and